



# APA Style Internet References

APA Style E-Sheet for Referencing Internet Sources © Copyright 2003 by Dr. Abel Scribe PhD - [www.docstyles.com](http://www.docstyles.com)

**The American Psychological Association (APA)** sells a comprehensive guide to referencing electronic sources on their new style Web site <http://www.apastyle.org> (\$11.95). This is the most authoritative and current source of information. Publication of the *APA Publication Manual*, fifth edition, in 2001 (click on this link to check the current price and delivery at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)), obviated prior formats for referencing electronic sources while emphasizing two key principles (see APA, 2001, p. 269):

- Lead the reader directly to the specific document cited.
- Only cite sources with addresses—URLs—that work.

Electronic documents referenced in a paper must be retrievable by others. If the document is no longer available when a paper is submitted for review or publication the reference should be updated or deleted (APA, 2001, p. 271). The following instructions derive from these principles.

**Page numbers** are required when directly quoting or citing sources. In the absence of page numbers in a document, the *APA Manual* offers these instructions (2001, pp. 120, 213–214):

- If paragraph numbers are visible, add the paragraph symbol or the abbreviation *para.* and the relevant paragraph number to the citation (e.g., Smith, 2003, ¶ 17) or (Smith, 2003, para. 17).
- If there are no paragraph numbers, cite the nearest preceding section heading or subheading in the document, and count paragraphs from there (e.g., Baca, 2003, Method section, para. 4).

**Aggregated databases** can archive abstracts, articles, dissertations, reports and other information. It may not be apparent to the user whether the database is online or on a university's CD-ROM juke box. "Therefore, when referencing material obtained by searching an aggregated database, follow the format appropriate to the work retrieved and add a retrieval statement that gives the date or retrieval and the proper name of the database" (APA, 2001, p. 278). *A URL is not cited even if it is available!*

**Newsgroups, forums, & lists.** "Care should be taken when citing electronic discussion sources—as a rule, these are not referenced in formal publications because they are generally not peer reviewed, are not regarded as having scholarly content, and are not archived for any significant length of time" (APA, 2001, p. 277). These sources, "at best," can be cited only as personal communications (e.g., Smith, personal communication, April 1, 2003).

**Omit needless words?** Forms used to help identify print documents—such as the publisher—are often not required for their electronic counterparts if the URL is accurate and current. But "if a document is contained within a large and complex Web site (such as that for a university or a government agency), identify the host organization and the relevant program or department before giving the URL for the document itself. Precede the URL with a colon" (APA, 2001, p. 274).

**APA Nota Bene.** There are a few other features of APA style that merit special attention.

- APA style now encourages the use of all the features available to your word processor, including italics, bold fonts, and hanging indents. Single space after *all* punctuation that requires spacing. Do not elide (drop digits) from inclusive page numbers. Write 1807–1814 not 1807–14.
- Use sentence caps for all titles except software (this may be an error in the *APA Manual*). For reasons unknown, the titles of Internet messages, software, software manuals, and computer languages are not italicized in references.
- Line wrap long URLs by breaking the URL *after* a slash or *before* a period (see APA, 2001, p. 271). Never insert a hyphen in a URL to indicate a break. Do not add a period to the end of a URL in a reference unless it is present in the original.

**URLs in APA E-Sheet** highlighted in blue are active, and can be used to access documents in the sample references if you view the *E-Sheet* while online (URLs broken to wrap lines are not reliable).

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***The APA Style E-Sheet references the spiral bound edition of the APA Publication Manual (2001).***

## Abstracts

### Abstract of a Technical Report from a University Web Site

Central Michigan University, Faculty Center for Academic Excellence. (1999) *Individual and group tutorials: Frequency and prevalence of use in the college of extended learning* (Technical Report 199908A). Abstract retrieved January 20, 2003, from <http://www.provost.cmich.edu/fcae/publications/publications.htm>

"If the issuing organization assigned a number (e.g., report number, contract number, monograph number) to the report, give that number in parentheses immediately after the title" (APA, 2001, p. 256).

### Abstract from a Secondary Database

Rivas-Vazquez, R. A. (2001). St. John's Wort (*Hypericum Perforatum*): Practical considerations based on the evidence. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*, 32(3): 329-332. Abstract retrieved January 19, 2003, from PsycARTICLES database.

A URL is not required when referencing a document from an aggregated database (APA, 2001, p. 278).

## Books & Chapters

### Book Online

Beers, M. H., & Berkow, R. (Eds.). (1999). *The Merck manual of diagnosis and therapy* (17th ed.). Retrieved January 17, 2003, from <http://www.merck.com/pubs/mmanual/>

### Chapter or Section

Beers, M. H., & Berkow, R. (1999). Mood disorders. In *The Merck manual of diagnosis and therapy* (17th ed., sec. 15, chap. 189). Retrieved January 17, 2003, from <http://www.merck.com/pubs/mmanual/section15/chapter189/189a.htm>

## Conference Papers

### Paper Presented at a Virtual Conference

Mathien, F. J. (1997). *Mesoamerican themes and Chaco Canyon*. Paper presented at the Evaluating Models of Chaco virtual conference. Retrieved January 17, 2003, from <http://www.colorado.edu/Conferences/chaco/mesomod.htm>

### Conference Paper - Abstract Retrieved from a University Web Site

Paternite, C. E. & Flora, R. (2000, September 22). *Involving educators in school mental health through action-oriented initiatives*. Paper presented at the Fifth National Conference on Advancing School-Based Mental Health Programs, Atlanta, GA. Abstract retrieved January 25, 2003, from <http://www.units.muohio.edu/csbmhpr/research.html>

## Journals & Newspapers

### Journal Articles

Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF) is rapidly becoming the global standard for rendering documents in electronic format. APA style recognizes that the online electronic version of a paper may be an exact replica of the print version. In these cases it is only necessary to add a note to that fact [Electronic version], without citing a URL.

*Print version:*<sup>1</sup>

Hypericum Depression Trial Study Group. (2002). Effect of *Hypericum perforatum* (St John's Wort) in major depressive disorder: A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA*, 287, 1807–1814.

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<sup>1</sup> International standards for using biological or medical taxonomical nomenclature require terms (*Hypericum perforatum*) to be placed in italics when inserted in plain text, and set in plain text when in a title formatted in italics. There are two components to a binomial taxonomical name, the *genus* (the first term) and the *specific epithet*. The first character of the genus is always capitalized (see *Scientific Style and Format: The CBE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers*. 6th ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Note: The APA *Manual* requires citing the full name of a corporate author like this; the acronym would not readily be recognized. However, shortening the author to “Hypericum Depression Trial” after the first text citation would probably be acceptable to editors of APA journals.

*Electronic version:*

Hypericum Depression Trial Study Group. (2002). Effect of *Hypericum perforatum* (St John's Wort) in major depressive disorder: A randomized controlled trial [Electronic version]. *JAMA*, 287, 1807–1814.

*Changed/doubtful source:*

Hypericum Depression Trial Study Group. (2002). Effect of *Hypericum perforatum* (St John's Wort) in major depressive disorder: A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA*, 287, 1807–1814. Retrieved July 7, 2002, from <http://www.jama.org/articles.html>

Note: The online version of a paper may occasionally differ from the print version, including material that was not part of the original or correcting errors. If you suspect this to be the case “(e.g., the format differs from the print version or page numbers are not indicated)” add the date you retrieved the document and the URL (APA, 2001, p. 271).

*Retrieved from a database:*

Hypericum Depression Trial Study Group. (2002). Effect of *Hypericum perforatum* (St John's Wort) in major depressive disorder: A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA*, 287, 1807–1814. Retrieved April 1, 2004, from MEDSYS database.

A URL is not required when referencing a document from an aggregated database (APA, 2001, p. 278).

### Online (Only) Journal

Kortepeter, M. G., & Parker, G. W. (1999). Potential biological weapons threats. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 5(4). Retrieved January 20, 2003, from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol5no4/kortepeter.htm>

### Newspaper

Markoff, J. (1996, June 5). Voluntary rules proposed to help insure privacy for Internet users. *New York Times*. Retrieved April 1, 1996, from <http://www.nytimes.com/library/cyber/week/yo5dat.html>

Note: There is no period after the URL in a reference. Break the URL to wrap the line after a slash or before a period. Do not insert a hyphen to indicate the break.

## Software & Software Manuals

### Software

Adobe Systems, Inc. (1999). Adobe Acrobat Reader (Version 4.0) [Computer software]. San Jose, CA: Adobe Systems, Inc.

Or . . . ?

Adobe Systems, Inc. (1999). Adobe acrobat reader (Version 4.0) [Computer software]. San Jose, CA: Adobe Systems, Inc.

The APA *Manual* (2001, p. 280) appears to be treating the title of a computer program as a proper name by placing it in heading caps. This is probably an error, but it does the same with the names of psychological instruments, inventories, and scales in various references. It is hard to understand the logic that would cap the name of a program, but not its manual (below)?

### Software Manual

Adobe Systems, Inc. (1999). Adobe acrobat reader 4.0 guide [Computer software manual]. Retrieved April 1, 1999, from <http://www.adobe.com/products/readstep/>

APA style does *not* italicize the titles of software or software manuals.

“Reference entries are not necessary for standard off-the-shelf software and programming languages such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Java, Adobe Photoshop, and even SAS and SPSS” (APA, 2001, p. 280).

## Technical Papers & Reports

### Government Report - Agency or Department Web Site

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General. (2001). *Mental health: Culture, race, and ethnicity —A supplement to mental health: A report of the surgeon general*. Retrieved January 17, 2003, from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services Web site: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/cre/sma01-3613.pdf>

"If a document is contained within a large and complex Web site (such as that for a university or a government agency), identify the host organization and the relevant program or department before giving the URL for the document itself. Precede the URL with a colon" (APA, 2001, p. 274).

### Government Report - Available via GPO Access Database

National Institute of Mental Health. (2002). *Breaking ground, breaking through: The strategic plan for mood disorders research of the National Institute of Mental Health* (Publication No. 0507-B-05). Retrieved January 19, 2003, from NIMH Web site via GPO Access: <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS20906>

"If the issuing organization assigned a number (e.g., report number, contract number, monograph number) to the report, give that number in parentheses immediately after the title" (APA, 2001, p. 256).

### Government Report - No Publication Date

Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. (n.d.). *St. John's Wort and the treatment of depression*. Retrieved January 19, 2003, from <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/stjohnswort/>

### Report from a Private Organization

Pezzey, J. C. V., & Toman, M. E. (2002, January). *The economics of sustainability: A review of journal articles* (Discussion paper 02-03). Retrieved from [http://www.rff.org/disc\\_papers/PDF\\_files/0203.pdf](http://www.rff.org/disc_papers/PDF_files/0203.pdf)

## World Wide Web Documents

### Document on a University Program or Department Web Site

Dewey, R. A., & Scott, W. (2000). *APA Publication Manual Crib Sheet*. Retrieved January 17, 2003, from the College of Wooster, Department of Psychology Web site: <http://www.wooster.edu/psychology/apa-crib.html>

### Multipage Document

Dewey, R. A. (2002). *Psych Web by Russ Dewey*. Retrieved January 25, 2003 from <http://www.psywww.com/>

If a website has several pages, cite the URL to the home/index page unless citing a specific document.

### Stand-Alone Document

Dr. Abel Scribe PhD. (2003). *Research writing test*. Retrieved January 20, 2003, from <http://www.docstyles.com/write.htm>



Dr. Abel Scribe PhD. (2003). *The APA Style E-Sheet for Referencing Internet Sources*. Archived: <http://www.docstyles.com/archive/apasheet.pdf>

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